

# **Heritage Impact Assessment: remains of homestead on Krantz Fontein 258, Kokstad**



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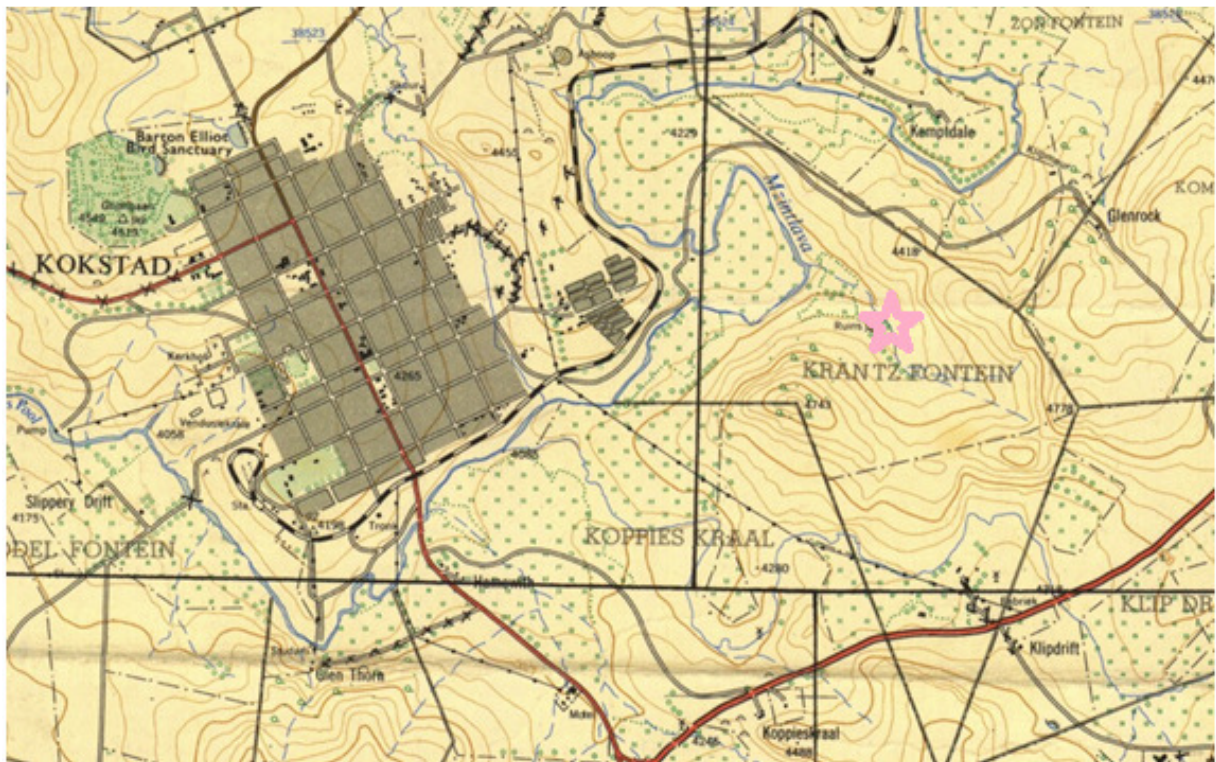
All buildings / structures over the age of 60 years are automatically protected by legislation. In terms of the National Heritage Act no 25 of 1999, provision for the automatic protection of buildings over the age of 60 years is made in clause 34.1 which stipulates that '*No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.*' Application for demolition or alteration of these structures would have to be directed to the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency for KwaZulu – Natal, *Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali* in Pietermaritzburg.

Please note also that whilst this heritage report has certain recommendations, they may or may not be upheld by the adjudicators in the appropriate Heritage Authority, when it comes to assessment. This is part of the process, and once that first level of adjudication has been completed, then the appropriate steps for a second phase can be assessed. Much can be achieved / mitigated in the design process, given correct briefing by the client and sufficient dexterity by the architects involved.

## 1. Introduction and Methodology

Debbie Whelan of Archaic Consulting was requested by Ms Verusha Nadar to carry out a Phase II Heritage Impact Assessment of the ruins found on the property Krantz Fontein 258, situated to the South East of Kokstad town. The intention of the development is the creation of a landfill by the Municipality.

The site is situated on the north east of a large hill that is found outside Kokstad town. Even in 1963 the topocadastral 3029BC shows the site as a ruin (See Fig 1 below). Currently, it is situated close to Bhongweni, which has latterly expanded eastwards to fill up the loop in the Mzintlava River. The site slopes down towards a small creek which feeds into the Mzintlava River. The landscape is largely grassland, with some outcrops of *Acacia mearnsii* and *Eucalyptus* sp. The area to the north of the krantz is very rocky.



**Fig 1: Topocadastral 3029BC 1963 showing location of site with a pink star.**

The baseline study for this report is that carried out by Gavin Anderson from Umlando: Archaeological Tourism and Resource Management in October 2012 titled *Heritage Survey of the proposed landfill site, for the Greater Kokstad Municipality Kwa-Zulu Natal*.

The site was inspected on foot on 29 October 2012, and photographs taken. Further to this fieldwork, archival searches were completed, as well as documentation consulted in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Archives Repository, as well as the Killie Campbell Collections. Old maps were used in order to assist in compiling the history of the site, as well as limited use of aerial photographs, since the first photography of the Kokstad area occurred relatively late.

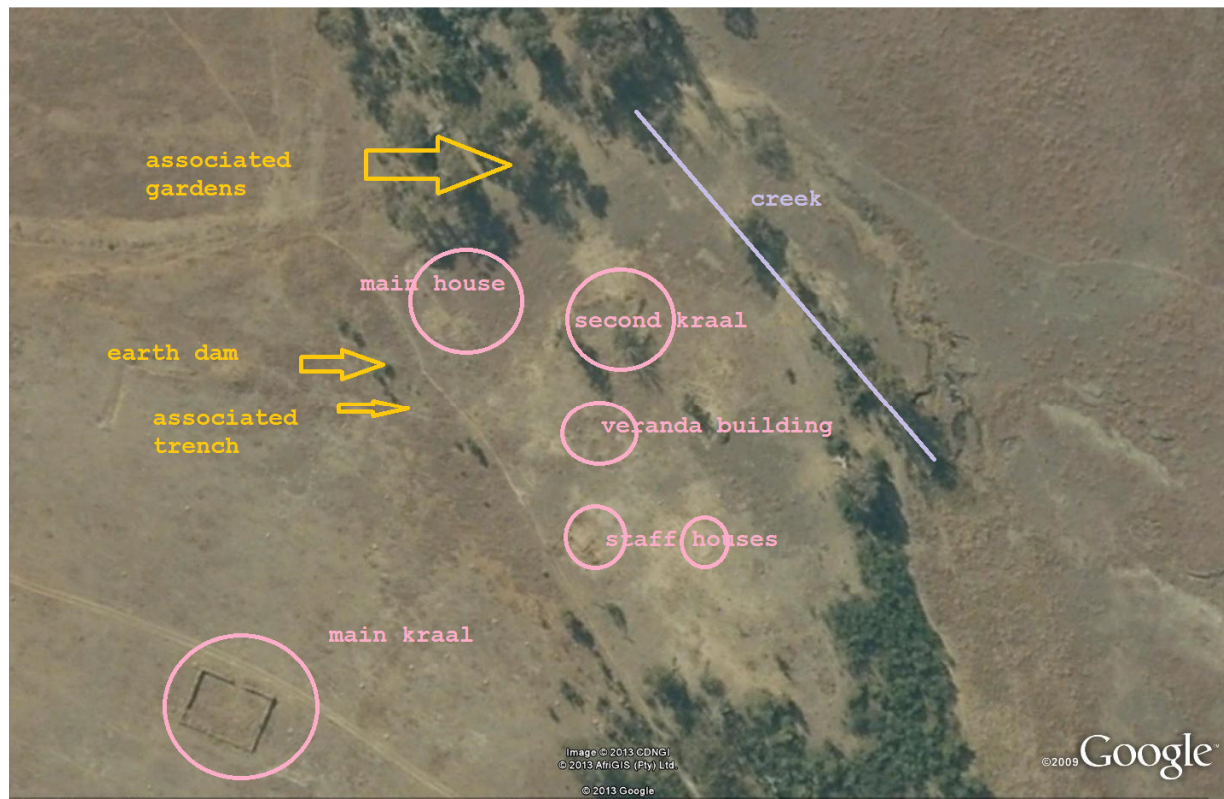
Given the strong association with Griqua history, the arrival of the Griqua and the associated land allocations was also investigated.

In addition, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Deeds Office was visited in order to inspect the land registers regarding the property in question.

Please note that the decisions made in this report are made in the context of the condition of the heritage resource, most of which are ruinous or merely floor structures. The practicality of retaining ruins is limited, given the potential safety hazard in areas in which the quotidian operations directly



impact or engage with the structure. Furthermore, even if the property is associated with a significant person in the history of Kokstad, the retention of ruinous structures is impracticable given its distance from the town. Stabilisation of ruinous structures is both costly and ineffective unless they are monitored constantly in an urban environment.



**Fig 2: Elements on site discussed in this report**

## 2. History of site

The farm Krantz Fontein 258 situated in the Mount Currie district was surveyed in 1878 by the Surveyor Westermeyer. The property had been previously occupied, as its boundaries were pointed out by Field-Cornet Moss Booysen (deceased at the completion of the diagram) and Lucas Visasie, who was the registered owner for over a century. The land registers note that the grant was registered in 1879 under East Griqualand Quitrents to Lucas Visasie. The next transfer occurred in 1986 when the property was transferred to Petrus Malan, and then in 1981 to Garth Meier. It passed into the hands of the Greater Kokstad Municipality in 2004.

Given their ruinous state, and in the absence of information as to who was actually living on the site, the structures on the site can only be associated with the tenure of Lucas Visasie, about whom little has emerged from archival searches both in those of KwaZulu-Natal and the Cape Colony.<sup>1</sup> However, the author is strongly of the opinion that this is a mis-spelling of the name in both the Land Register and the Survey Diagram: the Visagie family were known to be in the area. Furthermore, it is known that one of Adam Kok IV married a Cornelia Visagie. Lukas Visagie was a Griqua associated with the Griqua Rebellion in Kokstad.

<sup>1</sup> Audrey Steenkamp from the Kokstad Museum notes that Visagie and Visasie are possibly the same families. Scott Balson (2007:291) records a Jager Vesagie as a Griqua with Colonial sympathies working in Blythe's Magistracy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is reference to Vezasie families farming on Modderfontein in 1929, but after that, the Natal Directory does not record any people by the name of Visagie, Vezasie, Visasie or Vesasie. The corruption of the name suggests that the family was of Griqua origin.

The structures on the site would have all been completely modest, and in the vernacular. Only the fieldstone walls of the kraals remain, constructed as they were in a drystone method. The buildings have all been reduced to foundations, showing their size and intimating at their material construction.

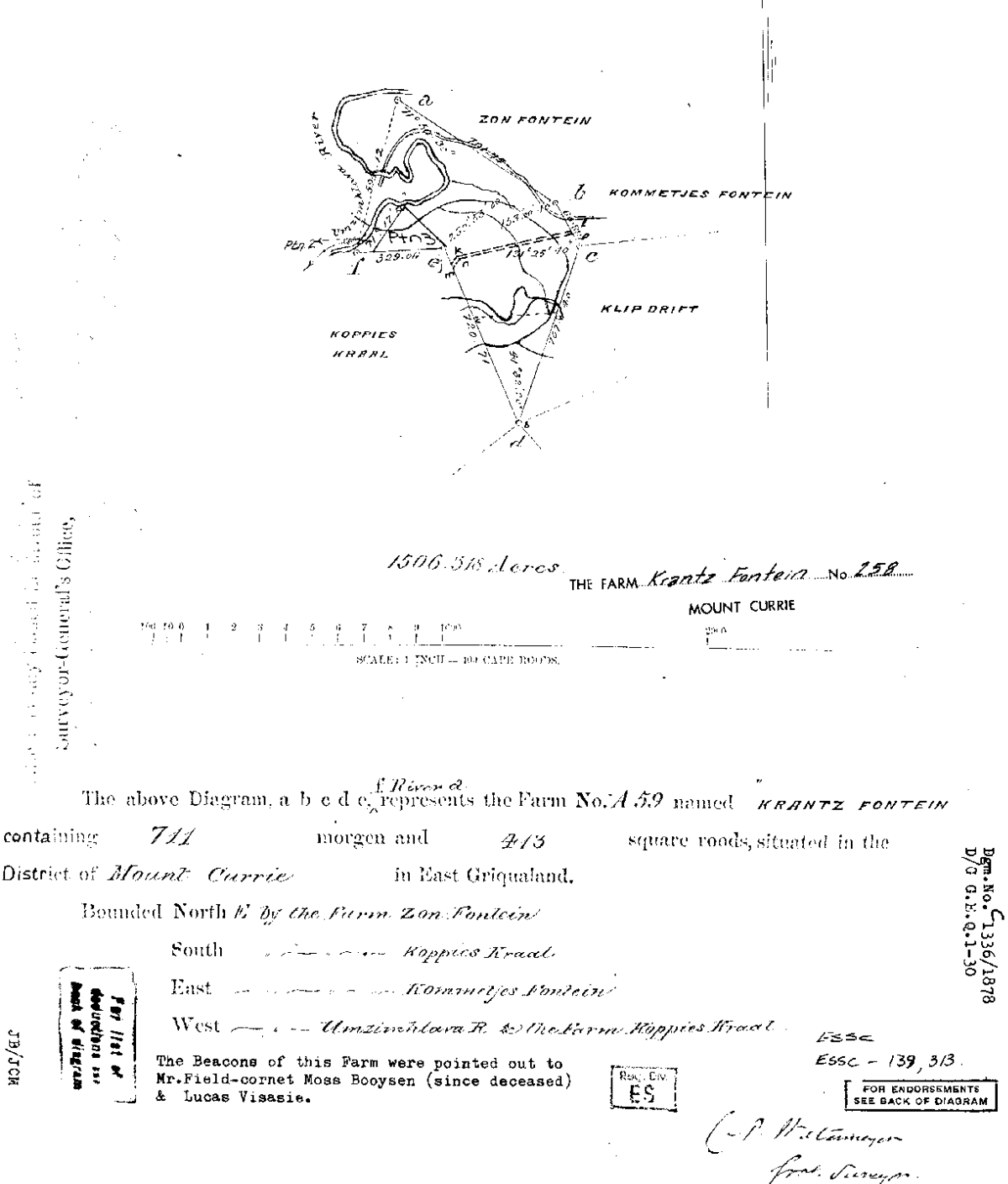


Fig 4: Survey diagram of Krantz Fontein 258



***Fig 5: 1955 aerial photograph showing the property as a farmstead – it appears reasonably intact at this point***

### **3. Assessment of structures**

As noted, few of the structures on site remain – reduced to foundations and recorded as ruinous as early as 1963.

#### **3.1 Main kraal**

The most prominent of the remaining structures is an old stock kraal some distance up the slope of the hill from the main complex. It is a substantial rectangular structure, roughly 23m by 33m, and constructed of packed fieldstone to create a wall about 1m wide (see Figure 7). To the east is an entrance. The condition of the structure is good, given its drystone nature.



***Fig 6: Kraal from the north corner***



***Fig 7: Corner detail***





**Fig 8: South corner**



**Fig 9: View south corner east to entrance**



**Fig 10: Kraal with Bhongweni in the background**



**Fig 11: View down to main homestead**

### **Significance:**

*The old stock kraal is a good example of a vernacular stock structure of which there are many extant examples. It is considered by the author as being low in heritage value, from an architectural, historical, scientific, technical and social aspect.*

*Furthermore, in the opinion of the author, demolition, would it be sought, could be carried out.*

<b>Old Kraal</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>Architectural</b>	low	low	low	low
<b>Historical</b>	low	low	low	low
<b>Scientific</b>	low	low	low	low
<b>Technical</b>	low	low	low	low
<b>Social</b>	low	low	low	low



### 3.2 Main house

The remnants of the largest structure on site measure approximately 14m x 48m. It has, in places, evidence of reasonably careful flagstones, but the spread of the stone floor is not consistent across the site, suggesting that it comprised a variety of different incremental spaces, added on as needed. The aerial photograph from 1955 does not elucidate as to its material structure.



**Fig 12: Floor structure of main house from north**



**Fig 13: Demarcation of main house**



**Fig 14: Floor of main house from the south**



**Fig 15: Floor of main house from the west**

***The elevational details of the main house are lost to history. The remnants are a collection of largely undressed stone which is laid to form a stabilised floor.***

***In the opinion of the author, demolition, would it be sought, could be carried out.***

Old House	Local	Regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low



### 3.3 House with veranda

This consists of the foundations of a much smaller building, some 10m x 18m. Like the main house, the main part of the structure has more carefully shaped stone, whilst the addition is founded with a simple outline of fieldstone.



**Fig 16:(left) showing veranda section and main building**

**Fig 17: (above) showing floor from the north east**

***The elevational details of the house with the veranda are lost to history. The remnants are a collection of largely undressed stone which is laid to form a stabilised floor.***

***In the opinion of the author, demolition, should it be sought, could be carried out.***

House with veranda	Local	Regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low

### 3.4 Staff dwellings

The aerial photograph in Figure 5 shows a couple of small structure, assumed to be staff dwellings. In reality, there is little left of them – in the one instance a shallow depression in the grass reveals the footprint of a small rondawel. In addition, two ruined mud brick structures show the foundations of what was a rondawel, and closely associated with it, a small square building, together occupying a roughly 10m x 11m footprint.



**Fig 18: Showing corner of square mud brick structure** **Fig 19: Showing base of rondawel**



**Fig 20: Depression in position of old rondawel**

**Fig 21: Mud brick staff house foundations**

*The elevational details of the staff houses are lost to history, although it can be reasonably safely assumed that they comprised conventional material employed in the construction of rondawels and similar.*

*In the opinion of the author, demolition, should it be sought, could be carried out.*

Staff houses	Local	Regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low



### 3.5 Second kraal

This structure is more randomly planned and built, compared with the structure described in section 3.1. Rather than the fieldstone being systematically packed, it is simply piled on. Furthermore, contrary to the example in 3.1 above, this kraal is neither orthogonal nor circular – it has no distinct planned form. There is also a copse of oak trees growing in the top corner.



**Fig 22: Southern edge towards the oak copse**



**Fig 23: View of kraal**



**Fig 24: Lower corner of kraal**



**Fig 25: Kraal from a distance**

***The second kraal has little merit, and is unplanned and random. In the opinion of the author, demolition, should it be sought, could be carried out.***

Second kraal	Local	Regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low



### 3.6 Earth dam

Given its apparent lack of evidence on the 1955 aerial photograph, it is suspected that this rather informal dam is of recent construction. It has a trench leading up to it, running for about 30 metres. The trench has a short dog leg return up the hill to the south.



**Fig 26: Showing the dam from the south**



**Fig 27: The feeder trench from the south**



**Fig 28: Trench looking south towards dog - leg**

***It is not certain whether this informal structure could be construed a heritage resource in terms of its age. Despite this, in the opinion of the author, demolition, should it be sought, could be carried out.***

Earth dam	Local	Regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low

### 3.7 Landscape

Given the age of the site, and the presence of planted landscape throughout the series of aerial photographs, it is perhaps valid to comment on the human constructed landscape. At the lower end of the site, along the river, are the remains of what used to be a farm garden. Most of the trees are imports: various types of *Eucalyptus* sp. as well as conifers, willows, poplars, oaks and other garden shrubbery. Although any structure of garden has long since disappeared, the retention of all or part of this copse, in a properly managed manner, could be beneficial to the establishment of the landfill in creating a green zone between the landfill and the river, as well as a shaded and protected place in which to establish any ancillary functions of the landfill site.



**Fig 29: (left) Established Eucalypts**  
**Fig 30: (above) Avenue of trees leading down to river.**



**Fig 31: Copse of Eucalypts looking towards creek**      **Fig 31: Old conifers**

***To some degree, the remnants of the old garden, whilst not an outstanding example of heritage, were they properly managed, stand as an opportunity in providing a green zone in the proposed landfill development. It is recommended that these remain and be sutured into the development plan.***

Old garden	Local	Regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low

#### 4. Conclusions

***Given the relative dearth of information about the site, its ruinous state for at least five decades already, and the unstable nature of drystone structures in a municipal landfill,***

- it is recommended that the main stock kraal be dismantled and that the stone be redeployed in a structure or structures that support the landfill from an administrative point of view***
- it is recommended that areas of the old garden be retained as a sheltered spot in the construction of any ancillary buildings in the development of the new landfill site***

#### 5. References

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